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FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4855

INFO RUEHGP/AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE IMMEDIATE 7172

RHMFSS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL IMMEDIATE

RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

RUEKJCS/CJCS WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE

RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI IMMEDIATE

RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE

RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

RHMFSS/USFJ IMMEDIATE

RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 TOKYO 001554

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR NEA/I-PM AND S/I

EMBASSY BAGHDAD FOR POLMIL AND SOFA NEGOTIATING TEAM

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/04/2018

TAGS: MARR PREL SOFA IZ JA

SUBJECT: IRAQI SOFA TEAM VISITS TOKYO

REF: A. STATE 53221

¶B. STATE 55889

Classified By: Ambassador J. Thomas Schieffer for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

¶11. (C) SUMMARY: A five-member delegation led by Iraqi Under Secretary for Multinational Relations and Legal Affairs Dr. Mohammad Alhaj Hamoud visited Tokyo June 2-5 to consult with Japanese and U.S. authorities on the U.S.-Japan Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA). The delegation received briefings at MOFA, MOD and at Headquarters, U.S. Forces Japan (USFJ). Their questions at USFJ focused on the role played by the Joint Committee, jurisdiction over contractors, whether there are controls over the amounts and types of weapons the United States is allowed to maintain in Japan, the return of facilities, entry and exit procedures for SOFA personnel, and Customs and taxation issues. At a subsequent dinner hosted by the Iraqi Ambassador, members of the delegation told Embassy officers they believed the visit was extremely helpful. Up until the last minute, it was unclear whether the delegation would continue to its next destination, Singapore, due to a lack of coordination with the Singaporean government. END SUMMARY.

¶12. (C) According to Iraqi Ambassador Ghanim al-Jumaily, who met with Political Officer prior to the arrival of the delegation, the purpose of the visit was to discuss with the Japanese their strategic partnership and SOFA with the United States. It was their hope that they could learn from the Japanese how to manage a long-term relationship with the United States, and they were looking forward to hearing about "lessons learned" from both sides.

¶13. (C) The delegation, accompanied by Japanese officials, visited USFJ Headquarters at Yokota Air Base on the afternoon of June 2, where they were briefed by Deputy Commanding General MajGen James Flock (USMC) and his staff. Embassy PolMil Chief and Political Officer also participated. The major issues the delegation focused on are discussed below.

ROLE OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE

¶14. (C) The Iraqis were very interested in learning how the Joint Committee works, and asked about its size, composition, the frequency of meetings, and how it reaches decisions. In addition, they wanted to know if the SOFA made reference to an "Executive Agent" as was the case in the draft agreement

they've been presented by the U.S. side. It was explained to them that the Joint Committee generally meets about once every two weeks, but can meet more often as circumstances and events dictate. It is headed on the U.S. side by the USFJ Deputy Commanding General and the Embassy's Minister Counselor for Political Affairs, who serves as the Deputy. On the Japanese side, the committee is headed by a MOFA official, due to the fact that when the SOFA was negotiated, Japan did not have a Ministry of Defense.

¶5. (C) The Committee's decisions are based on consensus, and it was explained that before an issue reaches the Committee, much advance work has been done by the applicable Sub-Committee, and, as a result, the final decision making process is generally quite easy and straightforward. In the rare event that the Committee cannot arrive at a decision, the issue gets bumped up to the political level. In response to a quest